

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 ARAE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 AID-05 PC-01 CU-02 EUR-12 /077 W

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P R 021600Z SEP 75

FM AMEMBASSY MANAGUA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7882

INFO CINCSO

AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA

AMEMBASSY LIMA

AMEMBASSY PANAMA

AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE

AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR

AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA

C O N F I D E N T I A L MANAGUA 3422

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR

SUBJECT: IMPACT OF THE PERUVIAN ANTI-VELASCO COUP ON CENTRAL AMERICA

1. ON AUGUST 29, 1975, I PAID A COURTESY CALL ON CORONEL HEBERTO SANCHEZ, MINISTER OF DEFENSE. DURING THE COURSE OF OUR CONVERSATION, THE MINISTER INFORMED ME THAT PRESIDENT VELASCO HAD BEEN REMOVED BY THE PERUVIAN ARMED FORCES AND REPLACED BY THE MORE MODERATE GENERAL FRANCISCO MORALES BERMUDEZ. THIS COUP, HE SAID, PRESAGED A SHIFT TO A LESS ANTI-U.S., PRO-THIRD WORLD LINE BY THE NEW PERUVIAN MILITARY GOVERNMENT.

2. MINISTER SANCHEZ SAID THAT THE PERUVIAN COUP COULD HAVE A MODERATING IMPACT ON THE HONDURAN MILITARY JUNTA, WHICH INCLUDED A NUMBER OF OFFICERS INFLUENCED BY THE RADICAL EXAMPLE OF THE PERUVIAN REVOLUTION. HE REPEATED HIS CONCERN ABOUT POLITICAL TRENDS IN CENTRAL AMERICA, AND THE INCREASED EFFORTS BEING MADE BY ANTI-U.S. POLITICAL FORCES IN THE UNIVERSITIES, TRADE UNIONS, CONFIDENTIAL

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AND ELSEWHERE TO WEAKEN THE THREE GOVERNMENTS IN CENTRAL AMERICA

MOST FRIENDLY TO THE U.S.: GUATEMALA, NICARAGUA AND HONDURAS.
HE POINTED TO THE LEFTWARD SHIFT OF THE HONDURAN MILITARY JUNTA,
THE RECRUDESCENCE OF RURAL GUERRILLA ACTIVITY IN GUATEMALA, AND
THE PRO-CASTRO GUERRILLA EFFORTS IN NICARAGUA.

3. HE WAS PARTICULARLY CONCERNED ABOUT HONDURAN POLITICAL
DEVELOPMENTS BECAUSE OF THE LONG FRONTIER WITH NICARAGUA, THE
IMPOSSIBILITY OF CONTROLLING THE BORDER, AND THE USE OF HONDURAS
AS THE INFILTRATION ON ROUTE BY CASTRO-SUPPORTED GUERRILLAS IN
THE PAST. HE WAS FEARFUL THAT PANAMA AND COSTA RICA ARE BECOMING
THE FOCAL POINTS OF SOVIET BLOCK AND CASTRO ACTIVITIES IN CENTRAL
AMERICAN. HE SAID THAT NICARAGUAN INTELLIGENCE HAS REPORTED
FREQUENT MEETINGS IN PANAMA BETWEEN OFFICERS OF THE HONDURAN
AND CUBAN ARMED FORCES.

COMMENT: COLONEL SANCHEZ SEEMS TO BE WELL INFORMED ABOUT POLITICAL-
MILITARY DEVELOPMENTS IN CENTRAL AMERICA, AND ESPECIALLY HONDURAS
WHERE HE HAS CLOSE PERSONAL CONTACTS IN THE ARMED FORCES. HE IS
OBVIOUSLY CONCERNED THAT HONDURAS MAY BECOME A BASE OF CASTRO-
SUPPORTED INSURGENCY DIRECTED AGAINST NICARAGUA. WHILE THE
BROAD OUTLINES OF HIS ASSESSMENT OF CUBAN INTENTIONS ARE CORRECT,
THE DETAILS ARE SOMETIMES INACCURATE OR OVERDRAWN.
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